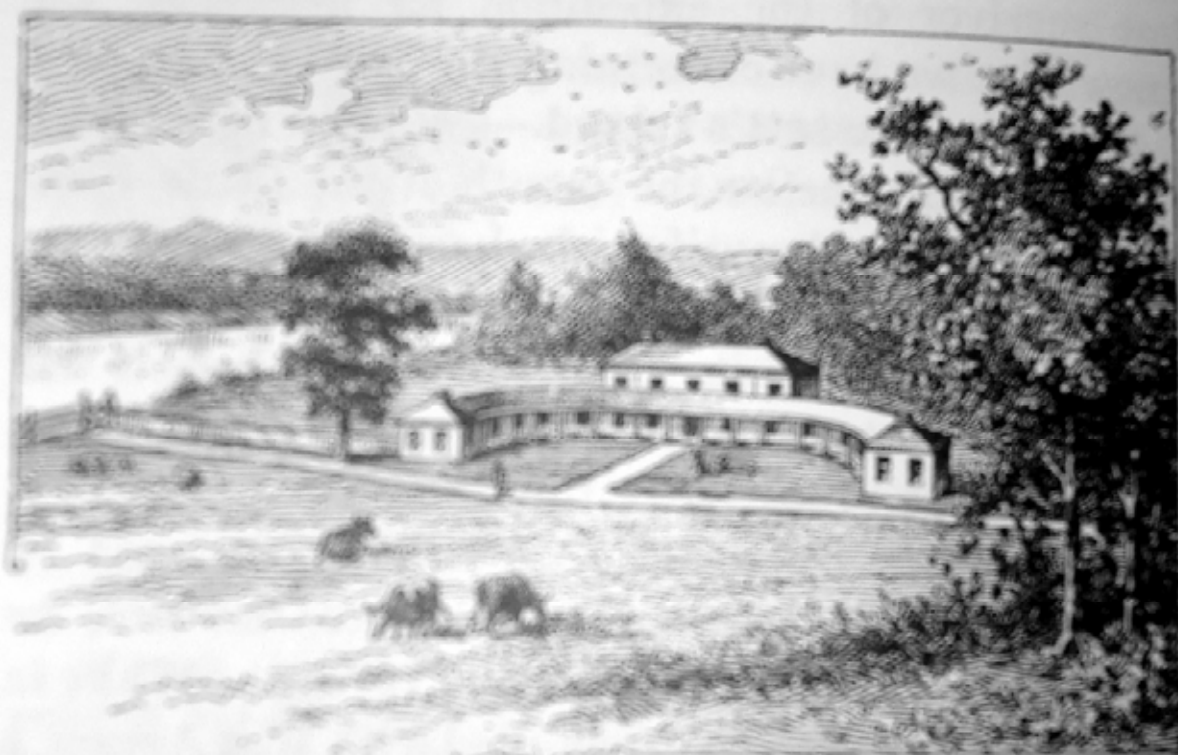


most comfortable mode of traveling on the western waters, and in the course of time arrived at Marietta, at the mouth of the Muskingum river. Here the winter was spent in social intercourse, and in 1798 Blennerhassett purchased the island which has ever since borne his name, and the same year moved into a block-house on the upper end of it. Here he



THE BLANNERHASSETT MANSION.

erected a palace, which was an ideal, an image of which had haunted his youthful fancy as a picture of sylvan beauty, of peaceful solitude, of calm repose. It was a mansion of which a king might have been proud. The halls were light, airy, and elegant, with gay-colored carpets, splendid mirrors, classic pictures, rich tapestry, with ornaments correspondingly elaborate, arranged with harmonious effect in accordance with the artistic taste of the mistress of the mansion.

There, too, was stored a most valuable library, containing the rarest and costliest books to be found in Europe or America.

8. Aaron Burr Visits the Island Home.—Aaron Burr, the slayer of Alexander Hamilton and late Vice-President of the United States, set out on a journey through the Western States, the object being ostensibly to purchase lands in the Louisiana Territory, but really to make arrangements for a private expedition against Mexico and the Spanish provinces, in the event of a war between the United States and Spain, which at that time seemed inevitable. Descending the Ohio, he called at the mansion which adorned the willow-fringed island, and from the moment that he set foot upon it that home was doomed. Blennerhassett was a shining treasure, just such as Burr was seeking. He listened to the recital of the wild and visionary scheme, and then embarked in it.

9. The Country in Which Burr Expected to Establish a Southwest Empire.—Beyond the Mississippi lay the vast region known as Louisiana, which the United States had but recently purchased from France. It was a region extending from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, and from the Mississippi to the Rocky mountains. Away to the southwest of Louisiana lay Mexico, of which Texas was then a part, a country whose national existence and traditions ante-date the discovery of America more than a thousand years. Its shores were first seen by white men in 1517, when Francisco Fernandez de Cordova, while cruising in the Spanish Main, landed on the

coast of Yucatan. It was Louisiana and Mexico in which Burr hoped to appear as liberator, then as ruler or sovereign of an empire reared within the limits of these countries.

10. The Expedition and Its Results.—In the autumn of 1806, active preparations began for the contemplated expedition. Blennerhassett had embarked his fame and fortune in the enterprise of Burr. Boats were constructed and freighted with supplies and munitions of war, and December 10th, 1806, under cover of darkness, the flotilla left the island and began the descent of the Ohio. The next morning a body of Virginia troops, under the command of Captain Hugh Phelps, occupied the island, taking military possession, and Mrs. Blennerhassett and her children left the island never to return. The mansion was greatly damaged, and was destroyed by fire in 1812. Burr and Blennerhassett were both arrested and taken to Richmond, where they were confined in the State prison. Burr was tried on a charge of treason and acquitted. Blennerhassett was released without trial. The family was ruined. Blennerhassett died on the Island of Guernsey in 1831, and the wife some years later in New York City.

11. The Journal of Judge Lewis Summers.—Lewis Summers, afterwards a distinguished jurist of Virginia, made an extended journey through what is now West Virginia in 1808. On June 30th of that year he left the home of his father near Alexandria, Virginia, and on horseback crossed the mountains to the westward. Passing through the Greenbrier

region he journeyed down the Great Kanawha Valley and thence up the Ohio river to Wheeling, from which



LEWIS SUMMERS.*

place he returned to his home on the Potomac. He kept a journal of all that he saw and heard, which has been published. It is one of the best descriptions of what our State was at that time that has come down to us. It was published with copious notes in the Southern Historical Magazine, in 1892.

12. Parkersburg Made a Town.—In the year 1773, Robert Thornton, of Pennsylvania, obtained a settlement title to 400 acres of land, including that on which the town of Parkersburg now stands, and in 1783 it was confirmed to him by the Virginia Commissioner of Lands. In December, 1783, James Neale, assisted by Samuel Hannaway, surveyor of Monongalia county, surveyed two tracts of land for Alexander Parker, of Pennsylvania, assignee of

*Judge Lewis Summers was born in Fairfax county, Virginia, November 7th, 1773. He was one of the most eminent men that the State produced, when the two Virginias were one. In 1808 he removed to Gallipolis, Ohio, where two years later he was elected to the State Senate. In 1814 he made Kanawha county, now in West Virginia, his home. There later, he was elected a member of the General Assembly of Virginia, and re-elected the ensuing year. In 1811, he was chosen Judge of the General Court of Virginia, out of the Kanawha judicial circuit. He was a member of the Board of Public Works for many years, and was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1829-30. He died at White Sulphur Springs, August 27th, 1843, having served for more than a quarter of a century as a judge of the General Court of Virginia.

Robert Thornton. And July 3d, 1787, his title was confirmed by the State. Parker died about the year 1800 and the lands descended to his daughter Mary, who wedded William Robinson, of Pennsylvania. The title to the lands was disputed and the suit resulting therefrom continued until 1809, when the Parker heirs gained possession of the land, and December 11th, 1810, the town was laid out and named Parkersburg in honor of Alexander Parker.

13. Wheeling in 1810.—A traveler who saw Wheeling in 1810, thus describes it: "Wheeling has but one street which is thickly built on for a quarter of a mile in length. The town has about 115 dwellings, 11 stores, 2 potteries of stoneware, and a market-house. And it had in 1808-9, a printing-office, a book store and library; the first two quit the town for want of public patronage; the last is still upheld by the citizens. The mail stage from Philadelphia to Baltimore arrives here twice a week by way of Pittsburg and Wellsburg and thence westward; the mail is dispatched once a week on horses. The thoroughfare through Wheeling of emigrants and travelers, into the State of Ohio, and down the river, is very great in the spring and fall. Since the completion of the great turnpike, business and the carrying trade is very lively in and through Wheeling." Such was the chief city of West Virginia nearly a century ago.

14. Steam Navigation on the Ohio River.—Robert Fulton took up the steamboat where James Rumsey, the West Virginia inventor, left it. Genius, aided by the money of Chancellor Livingston, gave to the world

the steamboat. August 7th, 1807, the "Claremont" left the wharf at New York and plowed its way up the Hudson bound for Albany. This boat was altered and called the "North River." The same year Fulton began the building of the "Raritan," designed for the river of that name, and of the "Car of Neptune," for the Hudson.

15. **Was the Ohio River Navigable for Steamboats?**—The fourth steamboat was to be navigated on distant waters. Beyond the Alleghanies the Ohio river flowed away to the southwest through what has since become one of the most productive regions of the globe. Whether that river was navigable for steamboats was not known, but Fulton and Livingston determined to ascertain. Nicholas J. Roosevelt was one among the most eminent civil engineers of his time and he was sent to explore the river. He, with his wife, reached Pittsburg in May, 1809. A little flat-boat was secured and supplies for the journey provided, and the two went on board and began the descent of the river. It was mid-summer and at every angle or curve of the stream an ever-changing panorama of river, hill, plain and forest was presented to view. Six months passed away and the little boat lay at the levy at New Orleans, and those on board went to New York by ocean conveyance.

16. **The Building of the Steamer "New Orleans."**—Roosevelt's report demonstrated the feasibility of steam navigation on the Ohio, and in the spring of the year 1810 the great engineer was sent to Pittsburg to superintend the building of the first steamboat

on the western waters. Within the present corporate limits of Allegheny City, Roosevelt laid the keel of his boat. The hull was 110 feet long and 24 feet wide. After nearly two years' labor the boat was completed at a cost of \$38,000. She was launched and named the "New Orleans." The pilot steered her up the Monongahela and back and up the Allegheny. It was her trial trip and it was most satisfactory. All things were prepared for the voyage down the Ohio. Roosevelt and his wife were the only passengers aboard. There was a crew consisting of a captain, and engineer, two pilots, six hands.

On September 27th, 1811, the day of the steamer's departure, there was great excitement at Pittsburg. Almost the entire population thronged the banks of the Monongahela. There was heard many a God-



STEAMER "NEW ORLEANS."

speed from the people as the boat disappeared behind the first headlands. Onward sped the steamer at the rate of ten miles an hour. Short stops were made at Cincinnati and Louisville and passengers and freight were taken on board at Natchez for New Orleans. It was the experimental voyage and the beginning of the greatest inland commerce of the world. From 1811 to 1818, fifteen steamers were built on the Ohio, and by the year 1820, forty had been built on western waters, seven of which had been wrecked and thirty-three were in service.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WAR OF 1812; NEWSPAPERS.

From 1811 to 1825.

1. **West Virginia in the War of 1812.**—When the second war with Great Britain was declared, Virginia called upon her sons to defend her soil from the foot of the invader, and nowhere did that call meet with a more ready response than amid the hills and valleys of West Virginia where dwelt the sons of the Minute Men of the Revolution. There lived the descendants of the men who had seen service in the War for Independence and had withstood the storm of savage warfare for many years. From the summit of the Alleghanies to the banks of the Ohio, men mounted their horses, strapped on their knapsacks and turned their faces from home.

2. **Their Gathering at the City on the James.**—There was no distinction of the rich and the poor. Gentlemen who had occupied conspicuous places in the halls of legislation, the plowman fresh from the fallowed field, officers, soldiers, citizens, all went with one accord. Within a fortnight after the call to arms, fifteen thousand men were encamped within sight of Richmond, among them the largest body of cavalry—horsemen from the west side of the Blue Ridge—that, up to that time, had ever been reviewed on the Continent. There were too many and in one morning, one

thousand of them were discharged and sent home. On their way over the Blue Ridge they met whole



GEN. P. H. STEENBERGEN.*

companies, some from the banks of the Ohio, still marching to the East. Commanding one of these companies was Captain Peter H. Steenbergen. Nearly a regiment of West Virginians marched to the West and served with General Harrison on the Maumee. Dr. Jesse Bennett, the first regularly educated physi-

cian in Mason county, was the surgeon of the regiment. Major Andrew Waggener, of Berkeley county, was the Hero of Lundy's Lane, and the first men to double-quick up Pennsylvania avenue, after the British General Ross had fired the National Capitol, was a battalion of minute men from the Virginia mountains.

3. Direct Tax Paid by the Counties of West Virginia.—The collection of a Direct Tax by the General Government is only resorted to in cases of great emergency. The second Section of Article 1, of the Federal Constitution, declares that "direct taxes shall be ap-

*General Peter H. Steenbergen was born July 12th, 1798, near Moundsville, in Hardy county. He was educated at Washington Hall, now Washington and Lee University, Virginia, and settled on the Ohio river in Mason county, now West Virginia, in 1811. When the second war with England came, he entered the army as captain of a cavalry company mustered in Mason county. He rose to the rank of colonel in the Virginia military establishment, and then to that of Brigadier-General, which he held for many years. He died July 13th, 1865.

portioned among the several states which may be included within this Union according to numbers." The first time that Congress availed itself of this constitu-



DR. JESSE BENNETT.*

tional provision was to aid in the prosecution of the second war with England, when, on August 2d, 1813, an act was passed requiring the collection of \$3,000,000.00. There were then eighteen States, and the amount apportioned to Virginia, was \$369,018.44. Of the counties now embraced in West Virginia, sixteen then had an

existence, and each paid as follows: Monroe county, \$1,030.50; Greenbrier, \$1,650.44; Kanawha, \$2,167.50; Cabell, \$1,546.50; Mason, \$1,130.50; Randolph, \$5,465.50; Harrison, \$2,672.50; Wood, \$1,338.50; Monongalia, \$2,992.50; Ohio, \$1,907.50; Brooke, \$1,195.50; Pendleton, \$1,428.50; Hardy, \$2,126.50;

*Dr. Jesse Bennett was born near Philadelphia, July 10th, 1769. After completing his medical studies, he removed West and settled on the Ohio river, six miles above the mouth of the Great Kanawha. Upon the organization of Mason county, in 1804, he was made Colonel Commandant, and as such was the custodian of the military stores belonging to the county. The same year he was visited by Harman Blennerhassett, who tried to induce him to join in the wild and visionary scheme in which he and Burr were then engaged. Bennett refused, but, fearing that the guns in his possession might be taken by force, he had them buried on Sealie Island until the danger was past. Dr. Bennett represented Mason county in the Virginia Assembly of 1806-9, and was surgeon of Colonel Dudley Evans' 2d Virginia Regiment, in the War of 1812. He died July 10th, 1842.